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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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I'll probably regret it, but I'm going to give Joe an opportunity to do his famous ROTFLOL impersonation. Officially, I'm old today! Yes, I know, I said that when I turned 30, then 40, and also 50. But, I can no longer say that I'm 50. Egads! 51! I'm more than a half a century old! I wonder how long it will take to get used to this! Well, I guess you're as old as you feel, according to many. Ahhhh, I feel much younger now!

It's been a great week weather-wise. It was nice to get out on the golf course a couple of times this past weeks and not have to worry about the heat. Even getting the lawn mowed is less of a task than usual. It's a nice time of year in New England; and it will get even better once the leaves start to turn in a few weeks.

Okay, let's get right to this week's issue as we have lots of good stuff this week. And, it will also give me the opportunity to get in some celebrating!

Until next time...

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EasyMiNT Forum Open

Hi all,

I have created a forum for EasyMiNT and other programs of mine, you can reach it from my HP http://mico-mint.atari.org

or via direct link

http://www.carookee.com/forum/EasyMiNT

Have fun!

Marc-Anton

MyMAIL 1.58

Hi all,

New version of MyMail (1.58) is released.

This is basically a binary update.
no changes is done on the RSC, help texts or Docs.

New/changes:

- Fixed memory leaks
- Added loadable charset
- Some minor bug fixes

Languages supported:

- English
- Swedish
- German
- French
- Polish

Download from:
---
http://erikhall.atari.org/programs/mymail.html

MyMail mailing list

You can add or remove yourself from MyMAIL mailing list.
The add/remove page is found at:
http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/mymailupdates.html

MyMail WWWBoard
---
http://erikhall.atari.org/mymailboard/wwwboard.html

Best Regards
Erik Hall

10th Anniversary of Gemulator

Hello from Emulators Inc. in Seattle,

You are receiving this email because you registered your email address
with us at the Emulators online store (which you visited either through

http://softmac2000.com or http://softmacxp.com). I am writing to update you on the status of our products.

Earlier this summer just prior to Macworld we sent out a mailing to thousands of our customers and people like yourself to announce the latest SoftMac Xpress release. Due to the strong response which we have received we are currently backlogged several weeks in our order processing. If you placed an order with us this summer, you have likely already received another email from me to notify you of this delay. We expect to have the backlog cleared by later this month and be back on our 5 to 7 day order turnaround schedule.

September is the 10th anniversary of the release of our Gemulator product, the world's first 68000 emulator for MS-DOS which featured both Atari ST and Apple Macintosh emulation for the PC. We first released Gemulator to the "net", not quite the Internet at the time, but rather to a series of BBSes as well as America Online and CompuServe, back in September 1992. The same month that I launched it in person at the 1992 Glendale Atari Fair. It is amazing how fast these past 10 years have gone by, and incredible number of product releases that we have made during that time. Including Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Windows 2000 releases of Gemulator, the 68030 emulation featured in Gemulator Pro, and the 68030 and 68040 Apple Macintosh emulation featured in our SoftMac product lines. Not to mention ST Xformer and PC Xformer Atari 8-bit emulators for GEM and DOS, the Xformer 98 and Xformer 2000 emulators for Windows, and the popular Gemulator Explorer file exchange utility for reading Atari ST and Macintosh disks on the PC.

We are preparing a 10th anniversary Gemulator release, which I'll be announcing on the Emulators web site in a few weeks as well as other news. I am glad to report that work on the SoftMac Professional emulator continues, with an expected release next year which will bring even faster 68040 emulation to the PC and new PowerPC emulation. I will once again be attending our booth at next year's Macworld Expo in New York to demonstrate the product as I did last year. I am also happy to announce that contrary to previous reports, we will posting a free release of the PowerPC emulator to the web. It will not be a pay-only product as some have reported.

Which bring me to my final topic, that being to remind everyone that as has been our policy these past 10 years, and really, for the whole 15 years since I first posted the Xformer Atari 8-bit emulator to CompuServe back in January 1997, that our products are FREE for non-commercial home use. All our of emulators and cross-platform utilities - Gemulator Classic for MS-DOS, Gemulator 2000 for Windows, SoftMac 2000, Xformer, Gemulator Explorer, SoftMac XP - can be downloaded from our web site. These are non-demo releases, and are the same releases which we sell on CD-ROM and license to schools and corporate customers, a concept strange to some but familiar to anyone who uses free products such as Linux and a concept I've always believed in. As someone who started my career in the computer industry as a teenage hobbyist in the 1970's, I learned from free software I downloaded from BBSes and learned from free listings printed in computer magazines. So I've always made it a point to freely give away most of our products for home use and why I remain so vigilant against computer consumers getting ripped off by multi-national multi-billion dollar corporations. And as with the free SoftMac XP 8.2 and the file system driver source code release earlier this year, we will continue to release new updates to our products and source code to some of our products free of charge via our web site. and yes, that will include the PowerPC emulator.

Please don't email me asking for release dates or other unannounced

information or for pre-releases. Remember to simply visit the http://www.emulators.com web site every few weeks for new announcements and new download. And don't forget to tell your friends that free emulators still _do_ exist on the web and will continue to be maintained and developed in the future.

If you have any comments concerning our products, our Emulators web site at http://www.emulators.com, or have computer tips you wish to share with me for publication on our Secrets page http://www.emulators.com/secrets.htm, please feel to email me directly at darekm@emulators.com.

Thank you for your time and enjoy our emulators!

Darek Mihocka
President, Emulators Inc.
http://www.emulators.com <http://www.emulators.com/>

History of Antic Cyber Graphics Software

Martin Doudoroff has created an amazing history of the Cyber graphics software that Antic published for the ST.

"This Web site documents some moderately obscure computer graphics software history: a suite of animation products produced in the late 1980's for the Atari ST personal computer platform. Although the fact is not widely known, this Atari software, published by a defunct computer magazine called Antic, directly preceded and led to the Autodesk 3D Studio and Discreet 3ds max products used by thousands of people today. The articles herein basically comprise an oral history: the information is drawn from interviews and hands-on exploration of the software, running under emulation or on original equipment."

http://asterius.com/atari

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Before we get to the stuff from the Usenet, I want to mention two things.

First, people are idiots. They really are getting dumber and dumber. On my way to work this morning, I came upon an intersection that I come to every morning. This time, there was a flatbed truck in the middle of the intersection. Now, we're not talking about a busy street. We're talking about a small road that goes from a town of about 20,000 people to a town of about 35,000 people. The truck evidently began going straight through the intersection and then decided that it should have made a left turn. Unfortunately, there were cars at two points of the

intersection with a two cars behind the truck ahead of me.

Obviously, the only move for the truck driver was reverse. So, being the last car behind the truck, I put it in reverse and moved back about a car length. I smiled a small smile as the car ahead of me also began to back up.

The smile went a way quickly as I watched the driver cut his wheels to the left and pull out into the oncoming lane and end up directly in the middle of the intersection, next to the cab of the flatbed. Now, no one could move. And no one did for several minutes. I sat there in mute amazement as one or two beeped their horns and made various hand gestures at no one in particular.

The "Stalemate of Stupidity" finally ended when one of the cars perpendicular to the road I was on decided to turn around and seek an easier way to work. From there... one by one... vehicles left the intersection until the truck was able to make the turn that it had intended to make in the first place.

As far as I'm concerned, this instance is proof in a supreme deity. How could such people possibly exist without divine intervention??

The second thing I want to mention is that the TEAM ATARI search group has just passed ONE HUNDRED years of contributed CPU time searching for radio signals from an extraterrestrial intelligence. Just think of it, a hundred years of CPU time contributed by fifty people in under forty months! HAPPY CENTENNIAL!!!

You might have noticed that I said "fifty" people contributed CPU time, and that there are actually 52 people participating in TEAM ATARI. That's because two people haven't returned any results.

It's not too late to join up either. If you're interested in joining, point your browser to: http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu and join SETI@home. Then go to: http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/stats/team/team_21046.html and join TEAM ATARI.

After three years of doing this, I still think it would be the coolest thing in the world to have the first signal from an extraterrestrial intelligence found by an Atari user!

C'mon and join us. Maybe we'll have a big online party for our bicentennial! <grin>

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
==========

Derryck Croker asks:

"Anyone any idea if the word "Ansch" in this line:

```
LiA -3 5250  4  ; LiA(Ansch,rest,length)|Linear depreciation per period
```

has an English meaning, and if so, what?"

Gerhard Stoll tells Derryck:

"In my dictionary stand:

Anschaffungswert = cost (or acquisition) value."

Derryck tells Gerhard:

"Thanks Gerhard, I've used "cost" - I'm no mathematician so I hope all this stuff is correct"

Jim DeClercq jumps in and tells Derryck:

"Did you know that you can type "ansch*" into LEO, and get all the words that contain that root, and get as confused as I did?

It seems to have the English meaning of "origin" or "original", as in "original cost" which seems to be the sense in context.

If true, where the percentage entry? "Rest" I do not recognize.

If we are on the same page, I would expect to see "original value", "percent per period" and "number of periods" in a linear depreciation calculation."

Peter West adds his interpretation:

"It's obviously an abbreviation, possibly for 'Anschaffung' = acquisition or purchase. Could also be 'Anschlag' = plot or estimate or 'Anschluss' = addition or 'Anschreiben' = put to one's account. 'Anschwellen' = increase (a less likely possibility).

I'd go for the first one if the context is something like compound interest on a loan or mortgage."

Derryck tells Peter:

"It looks like "cost" is the most probable translation.

Once this is confirmed I'll be releasing the English Texel 2.20 resource files and other data files.

I'm not sure if I'll be able to do the text that's embedded in the binary however, it's a very complex job."

Claude Bourgoin asks about using a ZIP drive with his Falcon:

"I have a Falcon030 with a 100 meg iomega SCSI zip drive. I used HDriver 7.+ to format and partition. The problem I am having is when I run Magic 5.11 the Falcon030 sees the zip drive, when I just run TOS 4.04 the falcon can no longer see the zip drive. Does anyone know what I am doing wrong or missing a step in the process?"

Uwe Seimet tells Claude:

"Sounds as if you have created a DOS compatible partition on your ZIP cartridge. Please refer to the HDDRIVER manual for more information on partition types."

Claude tells Uwe:

"Yes, that is exactly what I did. Because I needed to transfer some large files from my PC to the Falcon. I tried running Bigdos but the falcon still didn’t see the zip drive."

Uwe adds:

"I forgot to mention that the best solution in your case is most likely a partition that is both DOS/Windows and TOS compatible. This way you do not need any additional software for the Atari."

Claude now asks about his Falcon and SC1224 monitor:

"When I connect the Falcon030 to an Atari SC1224 monitor under tos the SC1224 monitor works fine. If I run Magic 5.11 using MAGXBOOT.PRG from the auto folder, as soon as the MAGXBOOT runs the monitor starts to scroll rapidly. Is their a solution to this problem?"

Don Wolfe tells Claude:

"I have one machine that has a similar problem, a MSTE-4mg with a 1224 monitor running MagIC 4.1 during the boot process the screen will start pulling and distorting. The cure for mine is a small program called Rezflip in the Auto folder and all is well."

Britt Park asks about a mouse for his Falcon:

"Does anyone know a supplier for a Falcon030 compatible mouse? Is the mouse the same for the Falcon030 as for earlier STs?"

James Alexander tells Britt:

"In short, yes you can use any st compatible mouse with a falcon, whether its the plain st mouse, beetle mouse, golden image or one of the others."

Well folks, I know it’s very short, but things have been a little slow in comp.sys.atari.st lately. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Gearing Up for Cyber Wars!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Sony Ships 40 Million PS2s Globally!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Japanese Game Developers Gear Up for Cyber Wars

Online gaming is still seen as a risky business, but Japanese software developers are positioning themselves -- some aggressively and others cautiously -- for a new battle over the next frontier of videogame play.

And analysts say online games, in which users go head-to-head over Internet connections, could hold the key to success in boosting their war chests over the long term.

"We are talking about incremental revenues, subscription-based business and very stable revenue streams for a company that is engaged in a hit-or-miss business," said Jay Defibaugh, an analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston. Japanese game publishers are expected to ring up profits, at least for a few years, from brisk sales of traditional software as the three mega console makers -- Sony Corp., Nintendo Co. Ltd. and Microsoft Corp. -- wage price wars, spurring demand for hardware as well as software.

But the longer-term prospects for Japanese game publishers appear less rosy than they would like.

The costs of developing software titles are rising as consoles have become highly advanced, armed with powerful chips that offer faster games and dazzling graphics.

Some analysts also noted that ordinary packaged games, which usually sell for 6,800 yen ($55.50), now look expensive compared with the consoles and may have to undergo price cuts.

Following a series of price reductions this year, Nintendo's GameCube now sells for 19,800 yen, Microsoft's Xbox costs 24,800 yen and Sony's PlayStation 2 retails at open prices.

Japan's declining birthrate and shrinking gaming population are also concerns, with data from the Computer Entertainment Suppliers Association showing that sales of game software in the country declined to 517.4 billion yen in 2001 from 577.9 billion a year earlier.

But Nomura Research Institute has estimated the online game market in Japan will grow nearly eight times to 271 billion yen in 2006 from 35 billion yen in 2001.

With console systems all hooking up to the Web, growth of the online game market is expected to accelerate.

Sony began selling network adapters early this year while Nintendo, which had been the most wary about online gaming among the three, plans to release a similar device in October.

Microsoft, the most aggressive of the three, will start a trial run for its online game service, Xbox Live, some time after October in Japan.

Daisuke Kobayashi, a game developer at mid-sized software firm Enix Corp., says having a head start is key as players tend to concentrate on a few online game Web sites and are unlikely to move on to newer offerings.

Unlike conventional software business where games can be popular even if similar titles exist, only one or two online games per genre can survive, he said.

"It’s very much like an oligopoly," said Kobayashi. "It’s first come, first served."

In July 2001, Enix launched the online game "Cross Gate" for personal computers and now has six million registered players in Asia, including Japan, with one tenth of them being avid users.

Kengo Nakajima, president of CommunityEngine Inc, an Enix affiliate that offers online game system solutions, said publishers need time to groom new types of creators as online games require a different set of skills than traditional titles.

"You need people who know the power of having a mass audience, who can communicate with them and are flexible about listening to them," Nakajima said. "It’s like being a politician, and we don’t see many people who meet these criteria." Capcom Co. Ltd. rolled out racing and fighting online games in 2000 for dial-up connections on PlayStation 2, and plans to offer its hit "Biohazard" action game for possibly broadband and "Tekki" for Xbox Live.

"We are at the stage of planting seeds before the blooming season comes," a Capcom spokesman said.

Sega Corp also started offering its role-playing mainstay "Phantasy Star Online" games for Nintendo’s GameCube earlier this month in Japan.

Still, some analysts said community-type online games in which a large number of players participate won’t take off for a few years, as they require hefty investments to run Internet servers and support other network systems.

Instead, they said, online games where people play one-on-one, or with a small number of people, will likely be the main format.

"Until the next generation of game consoles comes out, people will likely play peer-to-peer online games," said Takashi Oya, a senior analyst at Deutsche Securities. Oya also said software developers have been disappointed by a slow start for Square Co Ltd.’s "Final Fantasy XI," an

online version of its popular role-playing game that sold more than 38 million copies globally.

Since its May launch, the online game so far has amassed 120,000 players.

Credit Suisse First Boston’s Defibaugh said financial strength is a crucial factor, but added that just as original ideas brought major success to some small Internet businesses, online gaming could represent a vital opportunity for many firms.

"I’m quite sure that they do see opportunities here and they do feel that at least early on, some amount of investment is required and appropriate," he said.

($1=122.22 yen)

Sony Ships 40 Million Playstation2 Globally

Japanese electronics group Sony Corp. said on Thursday that it had shipped 40 million units of its blockbuster PlayStation 2 home video game console globally, after passing the 30-million mark on May 5.

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc, the game division of the consumer electronics giant, said 10.97 million of the units shipped to Japan, 17.01 million to the United States and 12.06 million to Europe.

The company aims to ship 20 million consoles globally in the year to March 2003, aiming to solidify its leadership position and widen the gap with Microsoft Corp’s Xbox and Nintendo Co Ltd’s GameCube.

Xbox, launched more than a year after PlayStation 2, has struggled to gain a foothold in the competitive gaming market.

Weekly Famitsu, a major Japanese game publication, said Microsoft has sold 274,000 Xboxes since debuting in Japan on February 22, while Nintendo has sold 1.565 million GameCubes in Japan since its launch in September 2001.

To shore up sales, Microsoft said on Thursday it would unveil five new software titles for Xbox at the Tokyo Game Show which kicks off on Friday.

The U.S. software giant said it plans to showcase 18 games, including five new offerings and two online games.

The new five titles includes "Battlefield Pizza Girl" whose content has not been unveiled yet, fighting game "The Wild Rings" and "Natural Ultimate Digital Experiment (N.U.D.E.)" in which a player assumes the role of a caretaker of a girl, who would then develop her own character and emotions.

The two online games are "True Fantasy Live Online," an adventure game set in a fantasy world, fishing game "Fishing Live Online."

Microsoft plans to start a trial run for its online gaming service, Xbox Live, sometime after late October in Japan with 5,000 players. Microsoft has been making a big bet on online games, building a proprietary online service. Xbox comes with built-in hard drive and an Ethernet port.

Sony and Nintendo, on the other hand, are less aggressive, both letting software publishers run their own networks and charge whatever they want. PlayStation 2 and GameCube require separate add-ons to play online games.

Also, users of Xbox need broadband connections while those for PlayStation 2 and GameCube can use either a broadband or a narrowband connection service.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

The Coming Virus Armageddon

Computer virus writers are known for building on each other's work to create ever-deadlier malware. In the future, a truly malicious code might not create an immediate uproar by hitting the Internet with a big bang. Instead, it could slowly and quietly seize control of a vast number of computers, doing significant but not immediately apparent damage to data.

How conceivable is the supervirus threat? "We never say never in this business," McAfee.com virus research manager April Goostree told NewsFactor. "We've never really seen it, but we've seen some things that are pretty darn close. I really don't see why it couldn't be done."

But Trend Micro global director of education David Perry disagreed, telling NewsFactor that given the nature of viruses today, it is unlikely that one could cripple the Web. "I really don't believe in the concept of there being an ultimate computer virus," he said. "There are rumors about there being a metavirus or megavirus, but it's fiction."

Regardless of probability, Goostree and Perry agreed that the key trait of a virus with the ability to knock out the Internet has nothing to do with technology. Rather, the ultimate virus would hinge on social engineering -- antivirus jargon for the tricks virus writers use to fool people into infecting themselves and others.

While most viruses use a mass-mailer to spread infection via e-mail, Goostree said it is even more effective to spread viruses surreptitiously, via a slow dissemination that draws little attention as it infects and inflicts damage.

Perry agreed, saying, "The worst viruses are the viruses that don't make any noise at all."

In addition to being stealthy, experts said, the ultimate computer virus would be polymorphic -- able to change its code, message and form to avoid detection. For the most part, antivirus software vendors detect and identify malicious code by using virus definitions, or virus fingerprints, that are unique to a specific virus.

One polymorphic virus in the wild is Hybris, which climbed the charts this year as it spread. "It changes so that antivirus products that could have caught it in x form won't pick it up anymore," Goostree said.

Recently, malware also has begun to grow more deadly by targeting computer defenses, as the Yaha worm does. For example, malicious code might disable antivirus and firewall software.

Such interference, coupled with installation of a Trojan program that would enable an attacker to control a machine remotely, could leave users "dead in the water," Goostree said. "You'd have no antivirus, no connection and no communication method to try and get help. It would effectively really cripple our communication system."

While most damage done by viruses today comes in the form of computer downtime and lost productivity, the ultimate computer virus of the future probably would destroy or overwrite files, according to Goostree.

However, execution of a lethal payload would be an impediment if a virus writer wanted to infect a large number of users, because data destruction would alert users to the virus' presence. "People would figure it out and fix it immediately," she added.

Although Trend Micro's Perry discounted the threat of a supervirus that could bring the Internet to its knees, he said emerging communications platforms -- including wireless and peer-to-peer networks -- are likely to come under fire from virus writers.

"I would stop thinking in terms of the Internet model we use to access computers today," Perry said. "As we proliferate more and more and more -- streaming media, video, new media, cell phones, PDAs and other internetworked devices, including the automobile -- all of those things are going to be eligible for viruses."

However, fear of viruses often does more damage than actual viruses, Perry noted, adding that if data is treated like property -- such as a home or automobile -- it will remain safe. "The proper technology and proper user education will lead us to a world where data is more secure," he said.

New Linux Worm Threatens Serious Denial Of Service Attacks

Security vendors are warning users running Linux Apache Web servers that they're vulnerable to attack from the first worm to use peer-to-peer networking technology. Dubbed the Linux.Slapper.Worm, it exploits a buffer overflow vulnerability within OpenSSL, often used in Apache Web servers.

Internet Security Systems Inc. is reporting in an advisory that the worm has "very powerful" distributed denial-of-service capabilities. Because of the worm, ISS has raised its Internet warning status to AlertCon 3, one notch below its highest level, AlertCon 4. Internet Security Systems estimates that the worm is spreading slowly and has infected 11,000 to 13,000 Web servers.

The Linux.Slapper.Worm spreads in similar fashion to last year's Nimda and Code Red worms, by scanning for, and then infecting, vulnerable systems. Because this worm establishes peer-to-peer links among infected servers, experts fear it could create a powerful platform to launch

denial-of-service attacks against virtually any target on the Internet.

According to Dan Ingevaldson, team lead of the X-Force R&D division at ISS, the first version may be a test to see how well the worm works before more deadlier versions surface. "Unlike Code Red and Nimda, where virus writers didn't have immediate access to the source code, the source code for this worm is already widely public," he says. "I'd expect new versions to start to surface."

Users of OpenSSL through versions 0.96d or 0.9.7beta1 are urged to upgrade to the latest version of OpenSSL, currently 0.9.6g. The OpenSSL vulnerability the worm attacks was first reported at the end of July.

Cybersecurity Plan Offers Tips, Not Rules

A Bush administration plan to improve computer security will impose no new regulations but instead use the "bully pulpit" and the federal checkbook to reduce cyberattacks, administration and industry sources said on Monday.

When cybersecurity czar Richard Clarke releases the long-awaited proposal on Wednesday in Silicon Valley, he will shine a spotlight on "safe computing" practices that security experts say are not widely enough used by Internet users.

Observers expect Clarke to announce that the federal government will direct some of the $50 billion it spends each year on software, computers and other information technology toward products that meet certain security standards.

But the former counterterrorism expert will shy away from imposing similar rules on an industry that has lobbied for months against them.

Instead, Clarke will offer a wide range of suggestions to businesses, universities and individuals about how to voluntarily shore up their online defenses, and will ask the private sector to offer suggestions of its own.

High-tech officials say the hands-off approach will allow them to lock down cyberspace faster than they could if they had to follow new laws or regulations.

"Talking and spending is probably the most effective means to get something done, rather than proposing legislation," said Stratton Sclavos, chief executive of security company VeriSign Inc..

But others said businesses were unlikely to spend extra money to secure their networks in the midst of a recession if they were not required to do so.

"Security budgets are flat for most corporations. If anything, they took money away from cybersecurity over the past year," said Ed Skoudis, vice president of security strategy for New York consulting firm Predictive Systems.

A Bush Administration official said the sheer scope of the project required the private sector, which control 85 percent of the Internet, to take the initiative. Voluntary "best practices" would get quicker results than laws which could take months or years to pass, he said.

While early drafts of the proposal required Internet service providers (ISPs) to bundle firewalls and other security software with their service, Clarke will now only suggest their use, high-tech officials said.

"ISPs take the position, quite rightly, that they're not security specialists," said Harris Miller, president of the Information Technology Association of America. "There are important issues about capacity, liability, cost."

Alan Paller, research director at the System Administration, Networking and Security (SANS) Institute, said Internet service providers can easily detect and stop Internet attacks. But they don't want to spend the extra money needed to upgrade their systems to help prevent worms or denial-of-service attacks, Paller said. They also don't want to be held liable for failing to do enough.

A proposal to ban the use of wireless networks by government workers, as the Department of Defense is considering, has similarly been softened.

"I think earlier versions of the draft did either imply or direct federal agencies to make pretty radical breaks with wireless technology until the security improves," said Mario Correa, director of Internet and network security policy at the Business Software Alliance, a high-tech trade group.

The latest version of the proposal only suggests that federal agencies and departments should not use wireless technologies in certain circumstances, Correa said.

The plan also suggests that federal agencies should follow the Department of Defense's lead in buying only software and hardware that have received certain security certifications.

In addition, the proposal asks industry to ship products that are more secure or in default secure settings, and get software patches and fixes out more quickly.

Clarke will also ask power plants, water-treatment facilities and other "critical infrastructures" to ensure that their internal networks cannot be hacked by outsiders, and ask universities to better monitor their systems so they are not used in cyberattacks.

Hotmail Aims to Can Spam

MSN Hotmail users may see a decrease in spam clogging up their inboxes in coming weeks, Microsoft said Wednesday, as it announced a deal with Brightmail to incorporate the company's spam-filter technology in its free e-mail service.

Microsoft said that it will deploy Brightmail's Solution Suite to filter spam at the incoming SMTP gateway, before it is delivered to Hotmail users' inboxes.

The spam guard will be fully deployed later this year, Microsoft said, to serve Hotmail's 110 million worldwide users.

The Redmond, Washington, company's spam-stymieing move is nothing new for

free e-mail services, many of which have already adopted spam-fighting measures. Yahoo, for example, routes unsolicited e-mail to a bulk e-mail folder in users' inboxes.

The Brightmail solution works by leveraging a collection of more than 200 million e-mail addresses designed to attract spam, allowing Brightmail to identify and eliminate spam before it reaches users' inboxes.

San Francisco-based Brightmail to have a significant foothold on the antispam market, boasting clients such as Earthlink, AT&T WorldNet, and now MSN.

Apple Releases Mac OS X 10.2.1

Apple today released the first update to the company's new operating system, bringing it to version 10.2.1.

According to Apple, the update delivers enhancements and improvements to the following applications, technologies and components: Mail, Image Capture, Help Viewer, graphics, printing, networking, Rendezvous, Kerberos, USB, FireWire, SCSI device compatibility and includes additional Digital Hub peripheral device support.

The update is currently available via the Software Update Control Panel in Mac OS X.

Apple Now Shipping 1.25GHz Power Mac

Apple Wednesday announced that its dual 1.25GHz Power Mac system is now shipping. The company introduced new Power Mac G4 systems on August 13, moving the entire line to dual processor configurations.

The new dual processor machines feature Xserve architecture with support for up to 2GB of Double Data Rate (DDR) memory at up to 333MHz, an ATI Radeon 9000 Pro graphics card and an enhanced enclosure with increased storage up to nearly half a terabyte, according to Apple.

"The Power Mac G4 with dual processors running at 1.25 GHz is the fastest Mac ever made," said Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing in a statement today. "The combination of the Xserve architecture and Mac OS X version 10.2 'Jaguar' provides an incredibly powerful and stable platform for our professional customers."

Each Power Mac system has two 400Mbps FireWire ports and four 12Mbps USB ports (two on system, two on keyboard). In addition, the systems have a front headphone jack; Stereo audio line in and line out minijacks; Built-in 56K v.92 modem; and an Apple speaker minijack. Currently the v.92 modem is available on the PowerMac and the eMac -- the iMac is still equipped with the v.90 modem.

Using graphics cards from Nvidia and ATI, Apple's desktop systems feature dual display support across the product line. A single AGP 4x graphics card has both the Apple Display Connector (ADC) and a DVI connector.

The dual 1.25 GHz Power Mac G4, for a suggested retail price of $3,299, includes 256K on-chip level 2 cache and 2MB of DDR SRAM backside level 3 cache per processor; 512MB of DDR SDRAM memory; ATI Radeon 9000 Pro graphics card with 64MB DDR SDRAM in 4x AGP slot; 120GB Ultra ATA/100 7200 rpm hard disk drive; and SuperDrive DVD-R/CD-RW optical drive.

Apple: .Mac Membership Swells to More Than 100,000

Apple announced Tuesday that more than 100,000 Mac users have already subscribed to its .Mac service. .Mac was unveiled to attendees of Macworld Expo New York this past July as the successor to Apple's free iTools service.

Available for US$99.95 per year, Apple's .Mac service offers customers 100MB of Internet storage capacity, hosting for home pages, the ability to share files and calendars via Apple's recently releases iCal calendar application, file backup capabilities, anti-virus protection and e-mail service through IMAP, POP and Webmail-based services. .Mac has been made available to existing iTools for a reduced price of $49.95 since the service was first unveiled in July.

.Mac has been the focus of some controversy since it was unveiled and Apple announced plans to discontinue the free iTools service; some iTools subscribers had wanted their free service to continue, or had hoped for a lower tier of .Mac services that would cost less money with reduced features. That hasn't come to pass, however, and users have been forced to either migrate their existing iTools accounts to .Mac accounts or face losing them come September 30.

With tight integration like Finder-based iDisk access and more, Apple is leveraging .Mac as an extension of the operating system. Additionally, newly introduced features like iCal calendar publishing and Backup 1.2 are only available to Mac users who have Mac OS X 10.2, "Jaguar" or later installed.

New Mac users can sign up for a free 60-day .Mac trial from the Web site. The .Mac package is also available as a retail package available through Apple Stores and participating authorized resellers.

Rivals Say Microsoft Violates Antitrust Deal

Microsoft Corp.'s rivals complained to the U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday that the company is reneging on some of the promises it made to settle its antitrust case last year.

In a letter to the department, a trade group representing Microsoft's critics and competitors said the software giant had not lived up to a promise to make it easy to substitute non-Microsoft software for some features in the Windows operating system.

Under the proposed settlement, Microsoft is required to provide a way for consumers and computer makers to enable or remove access to key software features such as the Internet browser and media player.

To comply with that provision, Microsoft added a feature to Windows XP in a "service pack" update to the operating system that the company released on Sept. 9. It allows computer users to remove access to some Microsoft features such as Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player and add similar software from other companies.

But the anti-Microsoft trade group, known as ProComp, complained the move is "hopelessly inadequate and misleading" because the company had made the new utility difficult to obtain and hard to use.

ProComp said Microsoft should have offered the utility separately, not as part of the bulky, hard-to-download Windows update. And it said the company has not given it a prominent place in the Windows "start button," as it promised to do in the settlement.

Microsoft spokesman Jim Desler said the complaints were groundless. He said the changes had been made in consultation with officials from the government and the computer industry.

"We are doing a great deal and are committed to implementing the proposed settlement, and will work closely with government and industry to ensure its success," Desler said.

"It’s unfortunate but hardly surprising that this special interest group chose to play politics rather than participate in this process," Desler said.

The settlement crafted by Microsoft and the U.S. Justice Department in November of 2001 gives computer makers greater freedom to feature rival software on their machines by allowing them to hide some Microsoft icons on the Windows desktop.

Nine of the 18 states in the lawsuit agreed to sign on to the deal, but nine others have asked U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly for tougher restrictions. Her decision is pending.

Ellison Resigns From Apple Board

Software mogul Larry Ellison resigned from Apple Computer Inc.’s board Friday, in a move that analysts attributed to investors’ demands for more vigilant directors.

Ellison, the flamboyant chief executive officer of Oracle Corp., had attended less than 75 percent of Apple’s board meetings during each of his five years as a director, according to Securities and Exchange Commission filings. No other Apple director missed as many meetings during that time.

Ellison stepped down after concluding that his attendance record wouldn’t improve in the upcoming months, given his duties at slumping Oracle and his upcoming bid to win the America’s Cup yacht race.

"My schedule does not currently allow me to attend enough of the formal board meetings to warrant a role as a director," Ellison said.

Ellison’s spotty attendance record at Apple’s board meetings hadn’t been an issue until a recent wave of corporate accounting scandals sharpened Wall Street’s focus on the watchdog role of company boards.

The current push for more aggressive directors outweighed the cachet Ellison brought to the board as a Silicon Valley legend and one of the world’s wealthiest men, said Soundview Technology analyst Mark Specker.

"It’s the end of the dilettante board era," Specker said. "Investors won’t tolerate having a director miss board meetings because he is too busy racing sailboats."

Ellison’s departure leaves Cupertino-based Apple with just five board members, including its CEO, Steve Jobs.

Ellison and Jobs have been close friends for years, a kinship that could have raised hackles with investors on the lookout for possible conflicts of interest.

But analysts said Ellison’s chumminess with Jobs probably wouldn’t have prevented him from remaining on the board if he could have shown up at more board meetings.

"Financial ties are more of a problem than friendships," said Charles Elson, director of the Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware.

Still, if Apple replaces Ellison, "it would be nice to see someone from outside the Silicon Valley who isn’t just another buddy of the CEO," said A.G. Edwards & Sons analyst Brett Miller.

Elson said shareholders should have been raising concerns about Ellison’s frequent absences from board meetings long ago.

"Like the saying goes, 90 percent of life is about just showing up. If a director can’t come to more than 75 percent of the board meetings, then he shouldn’t be on the board," Elson said.

Ellison joined Apple’s board in 1997 when Jobs rejoined the computer company that he co-founded during the 1970s.

With Apple suffering major losses at the time Jobs returned, Ellison helped give the company badly needed credibility and guidance, analysts said.

"It was nice to have a friend like (Ellison) on your board because he is a guy who has made his big dreams happen," Specker said.

Ellison said he will continue to counsel Apple’s management and Jobs said the advice will be welcomed.

Ellison, with an estimated fortune of $15 billion, didn’t receive cash for serving on Apple’s board. Apple began paying its directors with stock options in 1997. Ellison held 70,000 Apple stock options, according to the company’s most recent SEC disclosures.

Bidders Vie for Napster Remains

The most recent bidding in the auction for the remaining assets of the bankrupt file-swapping service Napster closed late Tuesday and the process

of sorting through those offers has begun.

"There were over two dozen inquires from around the world with two additional bids put forward in the court hearing on Friday. There are less than 12 formal bids and we are now determining which one of those bids has the highest probability of closing. Our goal is to present that bid to the bankruptcy court in Delaware on September 27," says Rick Chance, managing director of Investment Banking at Trenwith Securities.

Trenwith, the company conducting the auction for Napster, is a wholly owned subsidiary of BDO Seidman, with headquarters in Costa Mesa, California.

Chance declines to name the companies bidding for the remaining assets of Napster, though one bidder, Private Media Group, an adult entertainment media company based in Barcelona, Spain, last week made public its offer of 1 million shares of common stock in exchange for the Napster trademark and Napster.com domain name.

Earlier this month, Judge Peter Walsh of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, in Wilmington, Delaware, blocked the sale of Napster’s assets to media giant Bertelsmann, due in part to objections from record labels and music publishers.

Along with its brand, Napster’s remaining assets also include its technology for file sharing and DRM, or digital rights management.

"Because the assets of Napster have always mainly been the intellectual property and the technology, its primary assets are still intact oddly enough. There are also the hard assets, as well as the management team and employees. Though most of the employees are gone, some have expressed an interest in being rehired by the new owners," Chance says.

According to Chance, some of the bidders for Napster’s assets have "very interesting business models" that make use of the file swapping technology.

"Some of the business models involve music sharing in a way that would not require music labels to authorize the use of content, and some of the models are non-music related. There were really a wide range of bids from all over the world," Chance says.

Online ’Smiley Face’ :-) Turns 20

It was 20 years ago Thursday that Scott Fahlman taught the ’Net how to smile.

Other computer scientists know the IBM researcher for his work with neural networks -- a computer technique designed to mimic the human brain -- and helping to develop Common Lisp, a computer language that uses symbols instead of numbers.

But the planet’s 500 million Internet users can thank Fahlman for a flash of inspiration 20 years ago that helped to define online culture, in all of its ungrammatical glory.

On Sept. 19, 1982, Fahlman typed :-) in an online message.

The "smiley face" has since become a staple of online communication, allowing 12-year-old girls and corporate lawyers alike to punctuate their messages with a quick symbol that says, "Hey, I'm only joking."

Fahlman's innovation has since inspired countless other "emoticons," like ;-) to signify a wink, :-0 to show surprise, and (:)-) to say, "I am a scuba diver."

"I've certainly spent 10 times as much time talking with people about it as I did coming up with it in the first place," Fahlman said from his Pittsburgh home. "Hopefully my actual research career will add up to more in the long run."

In the early 1980s, computer networks were rarely found outside university science departments and secretive government facilities.

But even then, discussions on primitive online "bulletin boards" could quickly turn nasty when touchy users misinterpreted remarks meant to be taken lightly.

After a particularly tangled joke about mercury contamination in an elevator, users of a Carnegie Mellon University bulletin board proposed a variety of markers for humorous comments, including *, %, &, (#) and __/.

Fahlman suggested :-), along with the admonition to "read it sideways." Before long, other bulletin board users were placing the smiley face in their messages. The practice spread as Internet users found the symbol useful as a rough approximation of a twinkle in the eye.

Predictably, the smiley face encountered a few frowns as the online population exploded.

"Humans have managed to communicate with the written word for thousands of years without strewing crudely fashioned ideograms across their parchments. It is as if the written word were a cutting-edge technology without useful precedents," groused Neal Stephenson in the New Republic in 1993.

Fahlman stands by his creation. "If Shakespeare were tossing off a quick note complaining about the lack of employee parking spaces near the Globe Theater, he might have produced the same kind of sloppy prose that the rest of us do," Fahlman writes on his Web site.

Emoticons now crop up regularly in advertisements, and could eventually become an accepted part of the English language, said humor expert and Long Island University professor Jim Lyttle.

"Eventually, yeah, they'll creep in and become accepted," Lyttle said. "Most of the things that are in our language crept in colloquially."

Yahoo!, Microsoft and America Online all incorporate emoticons into their instant-messaging systems, while telecom firms, jewelry makers and online retailers have filed trademark applications for products and slogans that incorporate Fahlman's smiley face.

But Fahlman has never seen a dime from his creation.

"If it cost people a nickel to use it, nobody would have used it," he said. "This is my little gift to the world."

Net Use Ho-Hum for College Students

Andy Perez uses the library at Rice University in Houston for the quiet, not the books. He does his research online.

Edell Fiedler taps into the Internet to register for classes and check grades at Minnesota State University, Mankato, sometimes saving her the 60-mile drive to school. Rakesh Patel regularly uses e-mail to ask his professors at Chicago's DePaul University questions about assignments.

Stories like those have become increasingly common on college campuses. Now a new survey, released Sunday by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, has confirmed what they suggest: the Internet has become an integral part of college life, and not just for studying.

The survey of college students across the country found that 86 percent use the Internet, compared with 59 percent of the overall U.S. population.

"For this group of college students, the Internet just works. It's like turning on the tap and getting water or turning on the TV," says Steve Jones, the report's lead author and chairman of the communications department at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Anyone walking into a college computer lab, or classrooms that have computers, is likely to find students flipping through any number of Internet activities. They surf for information for assignments, download music files and play online games - all the while taking time to message friends who may be across campus or across the world.

It's what David Silver, an assistant professor of communication and the director of the Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies at the University of Washington, calls "social multitasking."

The survey found that much of students' Internet surfing is not related to schoolwork. In fact, 42 percent of students who use the Internet say they use it most often to keep in touch with friends by instant message or e-mail, compared with 38 percent who use the Internet most often for academics. Nearly three-quarters say most of the e-mail they send is to friends.

"My old roommate had Instant Messenger open 24 hours a day," Perez says, referring to the America Online service that allows private, real-time conversations via computer.

Though he thinks that's a bit excessive, Perez acknowledges checking his own e-mail "every minute" he's logged on.

That doesn't mean students are slacking off. Jones says his research indicates that students are simply using the Internet to help them pack more activity into less time.

Nearly 80 percent of students surveyed said the Internet has added to their college academic experience, while 56 percent said e-mail alone has enhanced their relationships with professors. The survey, which has a margin of error of 2 percentage points, was distributed randomly and

answered by 2,054 students this spring.

E-mail "gives you the ability to revise and edit your thoughts more carefully, whereas you might become nervous and slip in a public setting," says Ron Ayers, a Boston resident who recently graduated from Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y.

At Clarkson, Ayers oversaw that school's version of the Daily Jolt, a group of student-run Web sites that include everything from campus news and weather reports to dining hall menus.

"If they didn't have the Internet, I find it highly doubtful that they would read newspapers," Ayers says of his college peers,

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